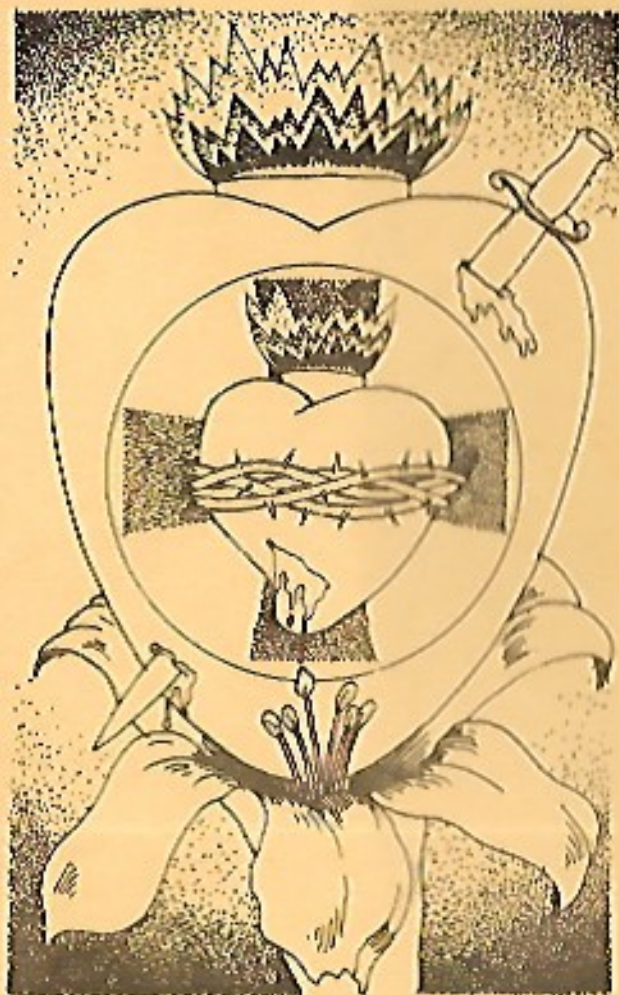




The Heart of Jesus, the Word Incarnate
in Mary, is united to Her maternal Heart;
and both are a single entity in suffering
for the redemption of the world

NOVENA TO



OUR LADY
OF PERPETUAL HELP

CHARITY



IMMOLATION

J. M. J. F.

THROUGH MARY, AND WITH MARY,
THE ROMAN, CATHOLIC, APOSTOLIC CHURCH
WILL TRIUMPH UNDER THE CROSS OF CHRIST

NOVENA
in honor of
OUR LADY
OF PERPETUAL HELP

Translated from the Spanish by Ma. de San Andres

May it be for the glory of God!

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Introduction

Because we are living in an era of great apostasy, many of the faithful cannot see the path that is most blessed and that leads safely to salvation. The complete Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help published here clearly illuminates that path.

On July 28, 1976, the Heavenly Father, speaking to the Portavoz about petitions made to Heaven, said: "I am all-powerful, and I can revoke an order of Mine; and I can and I want to. Because for Me, humans are My littlest children, the most beloved. That is why My Son, Jesus, has taught you, saying: 'Ask and it shall be given to you.'"

And as regards the particular devotion to Our Lady under Her title of *Perpetual Help*, She Herself, on the same day, said: "I live among you (Franciscan Minims) almost continually. I love all of you with a predilection because you honor MY PORTRAIT and the invocation I Myself gave to that image that the Apostle St. Luke painted with so much filial affection; I have given that image the promise of bearing My Perpetual Help. . . the Unitive Holy Spirit, Who is always seeking to attract souls to Marian devotion, inspired you with this; because the Divine Father has charged Me (with the duty of) uniting the world in the only and true Church, which . . . My Son founded with His Disciples."

Years ago, when speaking of these times, Our Lord, addressing the Pope through the Portavoz, said: "It is the hour of the linking of souls: The Immaculate Mother of Perpetual Help! Behold the chain! With Her and through Her, all nations will come to you. She is the Star of Triumph, Sign of Peace and Ark of the Eternal Covenant. Her promises are My promises. The love of all races is united under Her maternal mantle . . . May the blessed image of the Virgin be the Papal standard. And I will establish the union of peoples and of races in the bosom of My Church."

Brief Summary
concerning the History of the Image of
**OUR LADY
OF PERPETUAL HELP**

The miraculous image of the Mother of God, under the title of Perpetual Help, was venerated as early as the 15th century on the Isle of Crete. At that time, a pious merchant from that island found himself obliged, by the invasion of the Turks, to abandon his native land. Fearing that the sacred image would fall into the hands of the impious persecutors of the Catholic religion, he took it with him to preserve it from sacrilegious profanations.

After a dangerous voyage, during which Our Lady of Perpetual Help preserved the ship that was carrying Her holy image from inevitable shipwreck, the devout merchant arrived in Rome, where he died a few days later, in the home of a friend. Before dying he delivered that precious image to his friend, begging him to offer it for public veneration in one of the churches of Rome. But his friend, held back by human considerations, did not fulfill that sacred charge and kept the holy image in his power.

The Blessed Virgin appeared to him three times, ordering him to expose Her image for the veneration of the faithful in some church in Rome; and as many times that imprudent man refused Her. After a new apparition of Our Lady, accompanied by tremendous threats, that unfaithful trustee fell sick and died.

The widow of this unhappy man persisted in keeping the precious picture in her home. Several admonitions were necessary to convince her to fulfill the Divine will. Our Lady

appeared twice to a little daughter, just a few years old, of that lady, and commanded her to tell her mother that the Virgin of Perpetual Help wanted Her image to be publicly honored in a church situated on the Esquiline Hill.

The church indicated by the Virgin was that of St. Matthew, which was in the care of the Augustinian Fathers. This time the orders of the Mother of God were carried out. The image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help was venerated in St. Matthew's Church for a period of three hundred years.

At the end of the 18th century St. Matthew's Church was destroyed by revolution and the holy image disappeared, remaining hidden for a period of sixty years. In the year 1866, a series of events, directed evidently by Providence, had as their result the discovery of the sacred image. Pope Pius IX, of holy memory, moved by these events, ordered the image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help to be placed in the Church of St. Alphonsus Mary Ligouri, which was built over the ruins of St. Matthew's Church.

Since that day, through the intercession of Our Lady, miracles that made its ancient sanctuary so celebrated, have again begun to be verified. The veneration of the miraculous Virgin was propagated in an admirable manner. The venerable Vatican Chapter, moved by the singular favors the Virgin of Perpetual Help was wont to grant Her devotees, crowned Her solemnly with a diadem of gold that is usually offered to the most miraculous images. The devotion to Our Lady was propagated with miraculous rapidity in all Catholic towns and came to be, everywhere, a favorite devotion of Christian hearts.

To the examples cited in this booklet, we attribute purely human faith, in accordance with the decree of Urban VIII.

Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help

ACT OF CONTRITION

My Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, my Father and Redeemer, behold at Thy feet a poor sinner who has so grievously afflicted Thy loving Heart. O lovable Jesus, how could I have offended Thee and filled with bitterness that Heart that loves me so and that has spared no effort to attain my love? How great has been my ingratitude! But, O my Savior, be consoled, be consoled, I say to Thee; now I find myself repentant, such grief I feel for the afflictions I have caused Thee, that I would like to die of pure sorrow and contrition. O my Jesus! Who could make me weep for sin as Thou hast wept for it in Thy mortal life! My soul is oppressed for having offended Thee. Eternal Father, in satisfaction for my offenses I offer Thee the affliction and the sorrow the Heart of Thy Divine Son has felt for them. And Thou, O loving Jesus! give me such a horror for sin that from now on it may make me avoid even the most trifling of faults. Depart from my heart, earthly affections; I do not want to love anything now but my most bountiful Redeemer. O my Jesus, help me, strengthen me, and pardon me.

My Mother of Perpetual Help, intercede for me and obtain for me the pardon of my sins.

PREPARATORY PRAYER

to be said every day

O Most Blessed Virgin Mary! Who to inspire us with boundless confidence has been pleased to take the sweet name of Mother of Perpetual Help, I implore Thee to come

to my aid always and everywhere, in my temptations, after my falls, in my difficulties, in all the miseries of life and, above all, at the hour of my death. Give me, O loving Mother, the desire, nay more, the habit always to have recourse to Thee; for I feel assured that if I am faithful in invoking Thee, Thou wilt be faithful in coming to my assistance. Obtain for me, then, this grace of graces, the grace to pray to Thee without ceasing, and with childlike trust, that, by means of my constant plea, I may ensure Thy Perpetual Help and final perseverance. Bless me, O tender and solicitous Mother, pray for me now and at the hour of my death. Amen.

FIRST DAY

MEDITATION

The Title of Perpetual Help

Among the innumerable titles under which Christian piety is pleased to invoke the Blessed Virgin, there are few that are as likely to lift our hearts and fill them with unlimited confidence as the sweet name of Mother of Perpetual Help, a name that pleases Her so.

To convince you of this: consider, on the one hand, what the life of man on earth is, and on the other hand, what the name of Our Lady of Perpetual Help means.

Truthfully, what is life but a chain of miseries, dangers, afflictions and labors? *In the temporal order*, who is exempt from illness or from poverty? Who is there who does not

have to weep? *In the spiritual order*, who knows how, on every occasion, to be on guard against the great misfortune of sin, against the snares of lukewarmness, against the coaxing of temptations? Who does not weaken from time to time in the service of God, in the practice of virtue, and who does not tire at times in the path of good? Finally, what Christian does not tremble at the thought of the decisive and difficult moment of death, of the purifying fire of Purgatory? In view of such miseries and necessities, the soul, overwhelmed, feels itself weakening and would like to burst into tears. But, upon hearing the sweet name of Mother of Perpetual Help, it becomes serene, it takes courage, and continues joyfully on its path toward eternity. Why? Because it then feels that its lamentations are not lost in a desert, but that they find a gracious echo in the heart of a Mother Who desires, and is able, to help it. In truth, the Virgin of *Perpetual Help* means: a remedy for all the evils that afflict us -- a remedy not just for a day, but perpetual, from the cradle to Heaven, help in everything and help at all times. *Perpetual Help* means: consolation in afflictions, in poverty, in illness, in labors; strength to give up sin, whether mortal or venial, and not to fall into it again. *Perpetual Help* means: fidelity in the service of the Lord and of the Virgin Herself, and, therefore, final perseverance. *Perpetual Help* means: courage in the practice of virtue; special protection in the terrible hour of death; prompt and efficacious relief in the dreadful prison where just souls, who are still indebted to Divine Justice, suffer before entering the heavenly homeland. *Perpetual Help* means: that even when circumstances or situations occur where everything seems hopeless, there is still one certain recourse: the protection of the Blessed Virgin.

Meditate and ask for what you wish to obtain from Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

JOYS

*Thou art Perpetual Help benign:
Come, therefore, I implore Thee;
Come hasten to assist me,
O Mother sweet and kind!*

Hear, O Virgin pure,
Our fervent prayers of love
That fly to Thee above
On Thine exalted Throne.

*Come hasten to assist me,
O Mother sweet and kind!*

Stained by guilt and sin
I bow my head and cry;
And at Thy feet I sigh
For clemency and love. *Come hasten. . .*

Free the careless soul
From all its tepid ways,
And set the soul ablaze
With fervor in devotion. *Come hasten. . .*

Wretched in this vale
Of pain and tribulation,
For heavenly consolation
I humbly beg of Thee. *Come hasten. . .*

If my virtue wanes
When tempests howl and roar,
My energies restore,
Beloved Morning Star. *Come hasten. . .*

To Thy faithful child
Encouragement provide,
And toward virtue guide
His weak, unsteady steps. *Come hasten. . .*

Free my fickle heart
From all its lassitude,
And grant it fortitude
To lead a sinless life. *Come hasten. . .*

In the final clash
With death in all its fright,
How great my soul's delight
If then I can exclaim: *Come hasten. . .*

In Purgatory's fire,
Dear Mother, please be sweet;
Great Lady, I entreat,
Alleviate my pains. *Come hasten. . .*

Grant me, Mother dear,
As fond farewell to Thee,
To sing eternally
With love and praise to Thee:
*Come hasten to assist me,
O Mother sweet and kind!*

EJACULATORY PRAYER

O Mother of Perpetual Help, may Thy name never depart from my lips, nor forsake my heart.

EXERCISE

A visit to the image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, reciting ten Hail Marys and commending to Her all your necessities and those of your family.

PRAYER

O Mother of Perpetual Help! For the ingratitude with which, until now, I have repaid Thy mercies and those of God, I deserve, as just punishment, Thy depriving me of Thy

favours; for an ungrateful one is no longer worthy of fresh favours; but, O my sweet Mother, no matter how great my ingratitude is, Thy kindness is even greater. Do not disdain, therefore, to help a poor sinner who confides in Thee! Thy Heart overflows with charity for all and never has one heard it said that any unfortunate soul has left Thy feet without having his tears dried. Do not forget my miseries; intercede for me before the God of goodness, Who refuses Thee nothing, and prove once more that Thou art worthy of the sweet name of Perpetual Help.

EXAMPLE

During the last years of the 15th century, when the Turks were afflicting the Christians on the Isle of Crete with bloody persecutions, a pious merchant was obliged to abandon his native soil forever and seek safe asylum under the skies of Italy.

The vessel that conveyed him had scarcely reached the high seas, when it was lashed by a violent tempest, and, in a few moments, the hurricane tore off its sails and the raging waves destroyed its rudder. The crew, upon seeing their ship lost and made a plaything by the waves, terrified and struck with fear, awaited the death that would give them the depths of the ocean for their tomb.

In the midst of that frightful scene, only the merchant of Crete appeared to be serene. There was courage in his words and confidence glowed in his eyes. And as the fury increased, the pious traveler ran to the ship's interior, found his luggage, and uttering sighs of hope, returned to the deck carrying in his hand the image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

"Look," he exclaimed, addressing the afflicted crew: "Behold the Star of the sea; behold the beacon of navigators. Let us invoke Her in our afflictions. She will save us."

Upon saying these words, the merchant lifted the precious image before the terrified crewmembers who grouped themselves on their knees around his feet.

"Petitions arise from the earth and prodigies descend from Heaven," according to Augustine.

And sure enough: the travelers had hardly invoked Mary with that powerful cry of faith, when the hurricane stopped the course of its winds and the great ocean calmed its waves. The sun shone in the skies and the ship, rocked by the gentle breeze, went on to drop its anchors on the beautiful shores of Italy.

This was the first wonder the miraculous image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help manifested before the face of Christianity. She wanted to commence Her favors in a vanquished tempest, to teach us that, in all the torments of life, no matter how lost we feel ourselves to be, She will always be our life, our sweetness and our hope.

May the Virgin of Perpetual Help be loved, praised, invoked and eternally blessed! May She be my hope, my love, my Mother, my refuge and my life. Amen.



SECOND DAY

Act of Contrition and Preparatory Prayer from the First Day
(see page 6)

MEDITATION

Our Lady of Perpetual Help helps Her devotees to cease sinning

Among men, titles are often no more than vain designations that do not correspond to reality. In Mary, on the contrary, titles are always an expression of the most obvious truth. And thus the Blessed Virgin is called, and is truly, the Perpetual Help of all the unfortunate who have recourse to Her. Consider, however, that there is one class of unfortunates for whom the most loving Mother seems to reserve her most tender glances and whom She makes the special object of Her most compassionate concern: they are the poor sinners, and it is easy to understand the reason behind that predilection.

The greater the misfortune of a child, the more maternal love increases. Well then, what greater misfortune is there than that of being separated from Jesus and being chained to the shameful slavery of the devil? By losing sanctifying grace, the unhappy one has made himself the target of divine anger; the ire of God clamors against him, and if death should surprise him, oh, what a calamity! His lot would be among the reprobate. That is why the kindest of mothers pours out on Her children, the sinners, all the treasures of the mercy and tenderness of Her maternal Heart. She attracts them with the sweetness of Her name: *Mother of Perpetual Help*; with the fame of Her miracles and even with Her merciful glance.

How many sinners have not felt moved and converted on exchanging glances with this miraculous Virgin! That glance, filled with sadness and compassion, seems to say to the sinner: Unfortunate one! How long? How long will you afflict with your offenses the tender Son you see in My arms? How long will you offer Him gall and vinegar, rendering His passion and death useless? How long will you afflict Me, your Mother, and thrust into My Heart, one after the other, most cruel swords? How long will you persist in running toward the eternal abyss? My child, how long? . . . Tender words that only the heart hears; wondrous words that illuminate the understanding, soften the hardened heart, melt it, and finally, wrest from it that cry of the repentant prodigal: "I have sinned, my God; forgive me, forgive me." His tears flow abundantly and the Virgin presents them to Her beloved Son, and the sinner is converted.

Say if it is not so, you who have found before Her image repentance, life, pardon, peace and joy in your heart. Is it surprising then, that among the wonders the Virgin of Perpetual Help works every day, the stupendous conversions due to Her intercession number in the thousands! So certain it is that a pious writer said: "I do not know of any more efficacious nor more rapid means to obtain the conversion of a sinner than to inspire in him a tender and sincere devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help." And why would that wonder-working image want to be entrusted to a congregation of missionaries, accompanying them to the most remote towns and going in search of straying sheep in the most unknown and forgotten cottages?

Thus, beloved sinner, no matter what the number or the gravity of your faults, no matter how hardened your heart, all is not yet lost for you. Lift your spirits! Take courage! Have recourse to Our Mother of Perpetual Help and you will obtain forgiveness. She is the most safe refuge of the

sinner who sincerely wants to return to his God. Tell Her, then, with all your heart: "O Mother of Perpetual Help! Filled with confidence in Thy kindness and mercy, I throw myself at Thy feet. I come wounded with the arrow of repentance. My having offended God grieves me; my Mother, obtain for me true repentance and forgiveness." You will see that this benign Mother will make you return to grace and to friendship with your God. Amen.

Meditate and ask . . . Recite the Joys (see page 9)

EJACULATORY PRAYER

O Mother of Perpetual Help! Obtain for me the pardon of my sins and the grace of weeping for them until death.

EXERCISE

Recite the "Hail Holy Queen" for the conversion of the most hardened sinners.

PRAYER

O Mother of Perpetual Help! On seeing myself so contemptible and stained, I should not dare to come to Thee and call Thee my Mother; but I do not want my miseries to deprive me of the consolation and the confidence I feel penetrating me upon uttering Thy sweet name. I do not deserve Thy hearing me; I am a miserable sinner; but, oh, the evil is done. Thou canst remedy it. I beg Thee earnestly, my Mother, to come to my aid and to have mercy on me. I know Thou lovest even the most miserable sinners and Thou goest in search of them to save them. I deserve Hell, it is true;

I am the most miserable of sinners; but Thou dost not need to come in search of me. I present myself spontaneously before Thee with the firm hope that Thou wilt not reject me. Behold me here at Thy feet; help me; my Mother, I will not depart from Thy feet until Thy Son has said to me as to Magdalene: "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

EXAMPLE

Among the many wonders that Our Lady of Perpetual Help performed on the Island of St. Maurice (Africa), the following conversion is noteworthy. A young woman was rolling down the slopes of vice; in order to give free reign to her passions she had abandoned her paternal home. Be assured that it is impossible for a human creature to have ever fallen into an abyss of corruption as deep as this unfortunate young islander. Her desolate mother bewailed in silence with bitter tears the perdition of her daughter. She had recourse to the Virgin of Perpetual Help to obtain the conversion of the young woman. She began a novena. And on the second day, lo and behold, the young girl happened to pass by the Church, entered it, and found herself in front of the image of the Blessed Virgin. In spite of herself, the image attracted the glances of the unhappy sinner. That was sufficient to overcome her; torrents of tears flowed from her eyes, her breast choked in sobs, and the dart of repentance opened the way to the point of wounding this most hardened heart. The loving and afflicted mother arrived at the Church to continue her novena, and what was her surprise and joy on finding there her daughter! Transported with joy, she flew in search of the missionary priest and returned with great haste in his company to admire that Magdalene bathed in tears at the feet of Mary of Perpetual Help, to Whom the wonder of her conversion was due. This happened in the year 1871.

May the Virgin of Perpetual Help be loved, praised, invoked and eternally blessed! May She be my hope, my love, my Mother, my refuge and my life. Amen.



THIRD DAY

*Act of Contrition and Preparatory Prayer from the First Day
(see page 6)*

MEDITATION

***Our Lady of Perpetual Help assists Her devotees
to overcome lukewarmness***

Yesterday we saw how great is the tenderness of Our Lady with great sinners, but it is no less great with another class of souls in need, those who are called tepid, and are in a state almost as dangerous as that of mortal sin.

Although these negligent souls, who at times frequent the Sacraments, do indeed wish to avoid mortal sin, nevertheless they do not try to serve God, filling their lives with voluntary

venial sins; with superficiality they recite their prayers and carry out other devotions; they hear Mass, perhaps they go to Confession and receive Communion; but they do it out of routine and for human considerations; without fruit, without advancing in virtue; anger, lies, murmurings, rash judgments, nasty words, envies, laziness, vanity, impurities, dangerous and useless conversations, disordered attachment to the things of the world and other similar faults easily find their place in the hearts of tepid persons. Think of the great risk of being condemned for being in this state. St. Teresa saw the place for which she was destined in Hell if she were not more fervent. In the opinion of St. John Chrysostom, we must have more fear of habitual venial sins than of mortal sin, because, says this great saint, mortal sin is monstrous and in itself inspires horror, while tepidity leaves us calm and unconcerned. And was it not perchance against tepidity that Our Lord has proffered these tremendous words: *"I would that thou wert cold,"* that is, that you would be in mortal sin! Who would believe it, if God Himself had not said it? *"But because thou art lukewarm. . . I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth."* Who does not have a horror of vomit? That is why St. Gregory writes: "I do not despair of seeing a sinner, as yet unconverted, saved; but rather for the salvation of a soul that has fallen into tepidity." A terrible sentence that the doctors confirm when they teach that it is almost impossible for a tepid soul to be converted. O careless soul! It is sufficient to commit an habitual sin deliberately to be tepid and to find oneself in this danger. What will become, then, of you who commit so many faults with as much ease as the thirsty swallow water? But then, the soul who finds itself in that state will say to me: "Is there then no remedy for me and must I abandon myself to despair?"

O unfortunate soul! It is difficult for you to be converted. But with all that, do not despair. Consider that what is impossible on earth is not so in Heaven. If you wish with all

the earnestness of your will to throw off this dismal yoke, I will tell you a way as efficacious as it is easy. Lift up your glance; contemplate the image of your most kind Mother of Perpetual Help. Do you not see a brilliant star on Her forehead? It is the symbol of your hope. Place your confidence in Her, begin to serve Her with fidelity and you will feel your heart transformed. Devotion to this Mother of fair love is incompatible with culpable negligence. O, how many souls have given up their tepidity on the same day they have begun to be Her devotees!

What is lacking to you is the powerful love that fears to displease the lovable Jesus, for She is the Mother of this fervent charity that beautifies souls. She wishes to grant it to you more than you want to receive it. Do you want the miracle of Cana reenacted for you? Invoke Her with love. She will present you to the Divine Infant Who rests in Her arms, saying to Him: *"Vinum non habent."* (They have no wine.) "My Son, see this poor soul who does not have true love." And then your coolness will be converted into fervor, as the water was converted into wine. Our Lady will inspire in you a living desire to consecrate yourself without reserve to the Lord; She will give you a special delight in meditating on eternal truths; She will communicate to you a singular devotion to the August Sacrament of our altars; and thus you will be able to break the chains that imprison you and again be the delight of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Meditate and ask . . . Recite the Joys (see page 9)

EJACULATORY PRAYER

O Mother of Perpetual Help! Do not let me fall into tepidity, and if by mishap I may have fallen into it, quickly lift me from it.

EXERCISE

Before ending the novena, make a serious and fervent Confession, as if it were your last.

PRAYER

Behold me here, O my Mother! I am one of those unhappy souls who deserves to find myself abandoned by Thy Son and by Thee, in the miserable state of tepidity in which I have lived so many years; but the new lights that He imparts to me today through Thy intercession, and that mysterious voice that calls me to serve Him with fervor, are signs that He has not yet abandoned me. O Mother most kind! I have no fervor; I do not love Jesus as I should love Him, and nevertheless, I want to be all His. Help me to consider venial sin in extreme horror; make me fervent. Pray, do not cease praying for me so that I leave my tepidity and serve God with fervor until attaining Heaven, where I will be safe from all danger of losing God, sure of loving Him always, and of loving Thee, also, O Mother of Perpetual Help, for all eternity. Amen.

Do you see, O man! Whoever you may be and in whatever occupation you find yourself, you have no reason to be discouraged; find in Our Lady of Perpetual Help a most kind Mother, Who helps you in your miseries if you confide in Her; She will help you continually until seeing you one day seated at Her side in Heaven.

May Thou be blessed, then, Lord, for in Thine infinite mercy Thou hast given us Thy Blessed Mother as a refuge and opportune aid in every tribulation, and blessed is She Who is the Perpetual Help of the exiled children of Eve in this valley of tears. O Mother of Perpetual Help, what consolations, what sweetness the soul feels on pronouncing Thy name! For the tongue that utters it, it is an exquisite honey; for the ear that hears it, an harmonious melody; and for the heart that savors it, the most pure and holy joy.

EXAMPLE

A figure of tepidity, consumption, that terrible illness that even today mocks human science, afflicted a young North American woman for five years, during two of which she was unable to get up from her bed. Both lungs were affected and one of them almost completely lost. Several eminent doctors had declared that there remained no hope of saving her and that no more could be done than to alleviate the poor sick girl's sufferings. But she, having heard of the extraordinary cures due to the invocation of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, felt herself inspired with a great confidence in Her; and she begged her mother to begin a novena in the Church of the Redemptorist Fathers, where the miraculous image was venerated. On the ninth day, when the mother was preparing herself to go and make the last visit to the image, the sick one asked permission to accompany her. The poor mother, believing the girl was delirious, abstained from giving in to her. But behold at that moment the young girl arose and dressed without anyone's help. She accompanied her joyous mother to the church and, after having prayed with a fervor that is easy to imagine at the foot of the altar of her Heavenly Liberator, she returned to her house perfectly cured. Great was the surprise of the doctor on making his usual visit, when he found the sick girl up; but that surprise reached its peak when he found out that, in the morning, she had left the house. "My daughter is cured; my daughter is cured!" the mother repeated, transported with joy. The doctor, who was a complete unbeliever, did not know what to think of what he saw. He examined the lungs scrupulously and recognized that they were healthy and intact. When he had been told of all that had happened he could do no less than exclaim: "Well then; if there are such things on earth that can be called miracles, surely this is one of them."

May the Virgin of Perpetual Help be loved, praised, invoked and eternally blessed! May She be my hope, my love, my Mother, my refuge and my life. Amen.



FOURTH DAY

*Act of Contrition and Preparatory Prayer from the First Day
(see page 6)*

MEDITATION

***Our Lady of Perpetual Help defends Her devotees
in temptations***

Consider that one of the major difficulties in which man needs the perpetual help of Mary in a special way, is in temptation, that perpetual and provoking struggle in which we are engaged against the enemies of our salvation. All of us, the just and the sinners, feel ourselves inclined to evil. St. Paul himself, after having been carried up to the third heaven, exclaimed saying: "Unhappy man that I am. I see another

law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind and captivating me in the law of sin. . . There was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me."

Perhaps, my friend, you could use the same language; you, too, feel this dismal law of sin that wants to dominate the spirit, those vehement impulses of passions hungering for pleasure; Satan and a deceiving world hold out chains to you, too, and at times you find yourself in great danger of succumbing to the very violence of temptation. O then, what constraints, what straits are those to the soul who wants to be saved; it finds itself surrounded by so many and such powerful enemies; it feels its own weakness and frailty, and with all that, it has to defeat all its enemies together, under pain of being lost, perhaps for an eternity! How critical a position!

Christian, what will you do in this struggle so terrible with the world, the flesh and the devil? Will you surrender your arms declaring yourself defeated? No; that would be great and criminal cowardice. Ah! let that not be your conduct! Rather let us have recourse to Our Lady and Her Perpetual Help will attain victory for us.

It is related that the Emperor Constantine, having to face a decisive battle against Maxentius, an enemy of the Christians, lifted his eyes to Heaven and saw in the sky a brilliant cross with this inscription: "In this sign shalt thou conquer." And it was verified by the complete routing of Maxentius. Christian soul, you who are continually at war with so many enemies, Heaven presents you with the same banner in the image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Look at the veil that covers the virginal forehead of the Heavenly Queen; on it you will also see a cross that promises you the most powerful help of the merciful Mother of God.

Mary is terrible against the powers of Hell, like an army in battle array. She is the tower of David, constructed with

ramparts from which hang a thousand shields. Against this tower the sharp arrows of the enemy will break. She is the one Who crushed the head of the infernal serpent, and the powers of Hell flee, simply on hearing Her most holy Name pronounced.

Christian, have you looked for some time with reflection upon the image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help? Does not Her sight remind you of the prodigies worked in other times by the holy ark of the Lord? Truly, the Ark of the Covenant was covered with pure gold; it contained the manna that fell from Heaven; and two angels covered it with their white wings. By means of the ark of the Lord, the people of God attained their victories; the walls of Jericho crumbled; the Philistines were defeated; because the holy ark was with Israel. Well then, do you not see the gold of divine charity glow in the same way in the loving Heart of that kindest of mothers? Do you not see Jesus, the sweet manna of our souls, in Her maternal arms? Do you not see the angels in the background of that picture with their wings extended? Is it not by means of Her most powerful help that so many Christians have attained victory over their enemies? How many souls adorned with the grace of the Lord would be sunk in sin if they had not invoked Our Lady of Perpetual Help at the moment of temptation!

Thus, O Christian soul, make a firm resolution never to enter into combat with the enemies of your salvation alone, but rather accompanied by Most Holy Mary; Her Perpetual Help will serve as your shield and thus you will attain innumerable other victories in as many battles as you must endure. O Mother of Perpetual Help! For us Thou art the holy Ark of the Lord; with Thee we will win victories; before Thee the enemies of our salvation will flee terrified; in every temptation we will invoke Thy Perpetual Help and Thou wilt help us perpetually.

Meditate and ask . . . Recite the Joys (see page 9)

EJACULATORY PRAYER

O Mother of Perpetual Help! Do not let us fall into temptation, but deliver us from all evil. Amen.

EXERCISE

Accustom yourself to not arguing with temptation and to crying immediately to Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

PRAYER

O my Mother of Perpetual Help! I bless and thank my God for having inspired me with such confidence in Thee, because I know this confidence is for me a pledge of salvation. O, how unfortunate for me! If in the past I have fallen into sin, it is for not having had recourse to Thee. I hope that I have been pardoned through the merits of Jesus and through Thy powerful intercession. But I can again lose the grace of God; the danger has not ceased; the enemy does not sleep. O, how many new temptations remain for me to overcome. O most sweet Sovereign! Protect me, receive me under Thy mantle, do not let me fall. Grant me Thy Perpetual Help, and obtain for me the grace that, in all the assaults of Hell, I will not forget to invoke Thee, repeating without ceasing: "Mother of Perpetual Help, do not let me lose my God." Amen.

EXAMPLE

In Rome, two brothers, sons of good parents, on a certain day had a dispute, in which they became inflamed to such a degree that one of them took a stiletto (a type of short

three-edged sword) to wound the other. A sister of the unfortunate youths who witnessed the scene, gave a cry of fear and exclaimed in a tone of unspeakable sorrow: "My Mother of Perpetual Help, have mercy on us!" Scarcely had the young man heard this invocation, and in spite of the fury that carried him away, he threw down the fratricidal weapon and with the meekness of a lamb embraced his brother, saying to him calmly: "Let us make peace! I beg you!" The pious sister picked up the stiletto and took it to the altar of Our Lady, as a trophy of the victory that powerful Queen had just won over one of the most terrible passions of the human heart.

May the Virgin of Perpetual Help be loved, praised, invoked and eternally blessed! May She be my hope, my love, my Mother, my refuge and my life. Amen.



FIFTH DAY

*Act of Contrition and Preparatory Prayer from the First Day
(see page 6)*

MEDITATION

***Our Lady of Perpetual Help protects Her devotees
in all the necessities and afflictions of life***

Let us consider that the world is a place of trial, a valley of tears and weeping. Who is unaware of it? "Man," says Job, "born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many works and miseries." His work is that of Calvary. Such is the condition of every mortal. That is why the author of the "Imitation of Christ" says: "Man needs consolation." And this consolation . . . where will our afflicted heart find it? Perhaps in our friends and neighbors? Ah, no! Usually they look with indifference upon our tribulations; our tears do not move them; and if one of them is moved to compassion upon seeing our sorrow, often he does not know how to mitigate it in the least, because he is impotent. Of whom can we ask help in poverty, consolation in afflictions, counsel in doubts? Of Whom but of Her Who is the Perpetual Help of mortals.

Look, afflicted soul, see how the Divine Infant clasps the hand of His tender Mother. He has seen the Cross and the instruments of His Passion that the angels present to Him, and He has become terrified, and His Heart has said: "My sorrow is always before My eyes." But where does He seek consolation? In His good Mother Who extends Her hand to Him to support and comfort Him in His sufferings! Let us learn from the Heavenly Infant to have recourse to the compassionate Mother of Perpetual Help in our afflictions and

trials. Perpetual are our miseries; but, oh consolation! Perpetual also is Her Help.

Poor soul! Do not be discouraged. Your Mother sees the many and varied calamities that grieve you. She sees what torments your body and afflicts your soul.

Are you poor? Neither the necessities of your family, nor the afflictions of your heart, nor the tears you shed for lack of means with which to procure food for them or to satisfy your creditors or to provide honestly for your children pass unnoticed by Her.

Are you ill? She sees the pain that consumes you, the abhorrence that afflicts you, the fear that oppresses you, the days you pass without relief, the nights you count without rest.

Are you the target of another's envy or anger? Are you calumniated? Do you find reason for affliction within your own family? This compassionate Mother witnesses your bitterness, the injustices committed against you in tribunals, the harm your rivals cause you, the outrages and offenses you receive from your relatives. She counts your tears. This, with all the rest that afflicts you, She sees without withdrawing Her penetrating and benign glance from you for one moment.

And She not only sees it, but it seems that She feels it more vividly than you yourself. A mother is of mercy; and that is why, just as She sees our miseries with the eyes of a mother, with the heart of a mother She sympathizes with them. In such a way that, just as at the foot of the Cross, the wounds of the most sacred Body of Jesus were reflected in the loving Heart of Mary, thus all the injuries of our wounded heart are reproduced in that of our Heavenly Mother.

Finally, this tender Mother not only sees our miseries and our heart open and is moved by our misfortunes, but also She has Her hands extended in a gesture of helping us with all haste. And She exercises this pious office with us continually. Is She doing anything but granting us help in our necessities? Ah! no matter how little we dedicate our thoughts to the many laborious evils to which we are subject in life, we will come to see that in everything She defends us, relieves us, protects us. At the wedding feast of Cana, scarcely was She aware of the lack of wine, of the shame of the bridegroom and of the disturbance of the guests, when moved to compassion, She presented that necessity to Her Son, begging sweetly to apply the opportune remedy; thus, in the same way, now that She is seated gloriously at the right hand of Her Son in Heaven, She continually discloses to Him all our necessities. She begs Him without ceasing either to alleviate our miseries or to provide powerful help to suffer them with humble resignation, as this or that may redound to His greater glory and our spiritual good.

Well then: if such are the benign effects that we experience every day from the loving help of Mary, what must be our gratitude toward a Mother so kind, what must be our affection for a Mother so tender, what must be our confidence in a Mother Who loves us so and concerns Herself so much with us? She has Her eyes always fixed on our miseries, with Her Heart always disposed to be compassionate and with Her hands always open in an attitude of remedying them. Let us have continuous and devout recourse then, to this most kind Mother, disclosing to Her with filial confidence all our needs, and let us be assured that through Her we will have our perpetual relief, encouragement and consolation. Amen.

Meditate and ask . . . Recite the Joys (see page 9)

EJACULATORY PRAYER

In all my difficulties and miseries, come to my aid, O Mother most kind!

EXERCISE

When some labor is presented, say: O Mother of Perpetual Help! Take this chalice from me or give me virtue and fortitude to bear it for the love of my God.

PRAYER

O Mother of Perpetual Help! In the same manner as a poor, ragged and wounded one presents himself to a great Queen, I present myself to Thee, Who art the Queen of Heaven and earth. From the exalted throne where Thou art seated, I beg Thee, do not disdain to turn Thy merciful eyes toward this unhappy sinner. For that is why God has enriched Thee so much, to help the poor, and He has established Thee, Queen of Mercy, so Thou mayest alleviate the miserable. Behold me, then, and have mercy on me. I am not unaware that Thy merciful Heart finds consolation in aiding the miserable. Today, then, console Thy pious Heart and console me, too, since Thou hast occasion to assist me. See, O tender Mother, the afflictions of my heart; see the needs of my family. There are so many causes for affliction in my own home and so much persecution on the part of my neighbors; illness torments my body and interior pains devour my soul. In these afflictions, to whom must I have recourse, O my Lady and Mother, but to Thee, Who art Mother of Perpetual Help? Allow me, then, to say with St. Bernard:

"Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to Thy protection, implored

Thy help, or sought Thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence I fly unto Thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother! To Thee I come, before Thee I kneel, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but, in Thy mercy, hear and answer me. Amen."

EXAMPLE

At the end of the year 1883, while the freethinkers of the United States were celebrating their annual reunion in Rochester, and in their impious discourses were denying the existence of God and of His works, behold suddenly a marvelous event occurred that occupied the American press; it is the following:

In the city of Boston, the directress of a college had a horrible cancer in her breast that had broken out in three places. The most distinguished doctors of Boston had examined the disease and judged it incurable, unless there was a happy outcome to a surgical operation. The sick woman, although with repugnance, had to consent to it; but first she began a novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Eight days had passed without attaining the desired result and the operation was to be performed on the following day. Several distinguished professors from the university, among them its head, were to cooperate in this painful undertaking. They put the sick woman to sleep with a soporific drink and placed her on the operating table. The head surgeon was somewhat distant, and the surgeon assigned to begin that risky task, asked him with which of the three wounds he was to start. "With the largest," he was answered; but behold, the surgeon could not find any cancer. Very courageously the head surgeon approached the sick woman, and imagine his surprise when neither could he find any sign of the terrible disease; nevertheless, he affirmed solemnly to

the doctors who were present, that the previous evening and that very same morning he himself had seen three horrible cancers in the breast of the sick woman. He added that their disappearance was a mystery to him.

They released the sick woman and awakened her. Not feeling any pain she asked why they had released her. They assured her that the operation was not necessary. Having convinced herself of that fact, she began to give thanks to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, declaring to the incredulous, but stunned, doctors, that this was the work of the good Mother, in Whose honor a novena was coming to an end on that very same day.

May the Virgin of Perpetual Help be loved, praised, invoked and eternally blessed! May She be my hope, my love, my Mother, my refuge and my life. Amen.



SIXTH DAY

*Act of Contrition and Preparatory Prayer from the First Day
(see page 6)*

MEDITATION

*Our Lady of Perpetual Help sustains Her devotees
in the practice of virtues*

If it were sufficient to avoid sin in order to be agreeable in everything to the Lord, the benign office of our Mother would stop at this; for this alone She would provide Her Perpetual Help. But God is not content with not being offended; He requires positive service; He wants us to be perfect. "Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect," and truly, He wants us to dedicate ourselves to the practice of these Christian virtues. But how many difficulties are encountered in the path that leads to the holy mountain of perfection! It seems that good, solely because it is good, is now contrary to our corrupt nature. Just souls who have consecrated themselves to the practice of piety, have you not found it so? O! how arid and sterile is our heart, how incapable of producing any fruit worthy of life eternal, if the heavenly waters of grace do not fall to fertilize it! When a soul truly wishes to sanctify itself, it renounces itself, advancing each day in perfection, experiencing what the author of the "Imitation" says: "that sanctification is not child's play, nor the work of one day;" then it feels the need of perpetual and powerful help, of continual assistance. Ah, and this perpetual help, perchance we do not have it? Why do we withdraw? Why turn back in the face of difficulty? Do we not have Our Lady of Perpetual Help to protect us? Take courage, generous souls; your Mother will help you. Do you

not see that She presents you to the Infant Jesus? And why, except to incite us to the practice of virtue? The knowledge alone that his king is watching him gives courage to the warrior in combat. Thus, when good is made difficult for us, when we are about to weaken, let us fix our glance on the image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The sight of the adorable Infant Who one day must reward us, encourages us, and we will have the courage to practice the most heroic virtues.

Children of Mary, would you like to be truly virtuous, but always find in your interior that reserve of self-love that poisons your good works? Invoke Our Lady of Perpetual Help and in a little while your spirit, like Hers, will seek nothing but the good pleasure and glory of God. Are you the target of continuous contradictions? Do you lack patience? Invoke Our Lady of Perpetual Help frequently and you will be meek and humble of heart. Is it your desire to live detached from all disordered affections for creatures, but that miserable heart always takes delight in the vanities of the world? Invoke Our Lady of Perpetual Help and you will grasp the vanity of everything created. The white lily of chastity has enamored you -- do you want to preserve it immaculate or acquire it again, if through misfortune you lost it? Invoke Our Lady of Perpetual Help and soon you will be singing within yourself to Him Who grazes among the lilies. *"As the lily among thorns, so is my beloved among the daughters."* Faith, hope and charity, queen of virtues, wish to place their throne in your heart? Who will grant you that favor but the Virgin Who bears on Her forehead the star of faith and the Cross that is all our hope, and in Her arms, the love of the Divine Jesus? The wound of an insult received does not want to heal in your heart? Invoke Our Lady of Perpetual Help and you will succeed in doing good to those who offended you. Finally, are you in the flower of your age? Does the choice of a way of life concern you?

Pray to Her like other souls whom She has helped, enlightening them about the vanities of the world and enkindling in them the love of their God, to the point of their abandoning everything and consecrating themselves to the Lord, by means of the sacred vows of religion. And finally, if you have chosen your vocation and wish to work out your sanctification in the world, make yourself a devotee of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and you will attain it.

O with what speed those who consecrate themselves to the veneration of Our Lady advance on the path of perfection! That precious devotion seems to give them wings to fly to the heights of sanctity; let the priests who have inculcated it in their penitents speak about it. O, only in Heaven will it be known how many souls have reached perfection through that so easy means. Dedicate yourselves, then, pious souls, from now on, to the service of that gracious Mother and one day you will be Her crown in glory.

Meditate and ask . . . Recite the Joys (see page 9)

EJACULATORY PRAYER

O Mother of Perpetual Help, I want to be a faithful imitator of Thy virtues; help me in such a noble undertaking.

EXERCISE

Recite the Holy Rosary in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help to obtain the gift of never weakening in the practice of virtue.

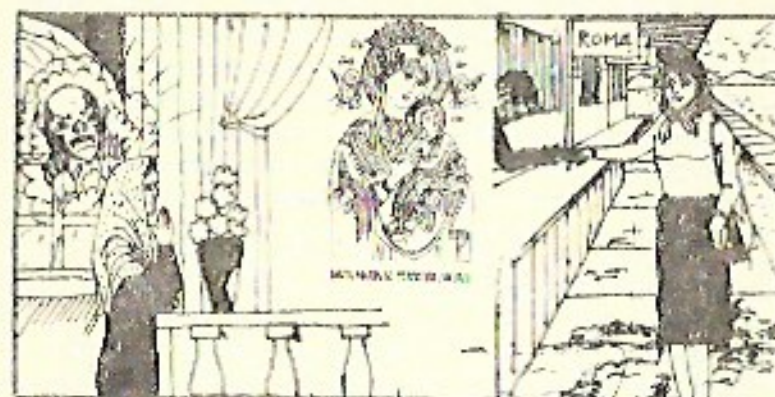
PRAYER

O my Mother of Perpetual Help! How is it possible that, with Thy being so holy, I must be so wicked? Today I do not come to ask temporal goods of Thee, but things more pleasing to Thy Heart. Thou art most humble; attain for me, then, humility and love for contempt. Thou, Who wast most patient in the afflictions of life, obtain for me patience in adversities. Thou, Who lived always withdrawn from everything created, obtain for me detachment from all creatures. Thou, Who wast always pure and spotless, attain for me a perfect purity of heart. Thou, Who wast filled with love for God, attain for me the gift of holy and pure love. Thou, Who wast all charity for Thy neighbor, grant that I may have a holy and efficacious love for my brothers. Thou, Who wast always united to the will of God, obtain the same grace for me, above all in my choice of a state of life, and a complete conformity with all the dispositions of Divine Providence. In a word: O most holy of creatures, make me a saint! These are the graces I beg of Thee. Do not let me weaken in the practice of virtue, O Mary, my Mother, my love, my life, my refuge, my consolation, my Perpetual Help. Amen.

EXAMPLE

Interior afflictions were tormenting a woman of Finales, to the extent that she was suffering grave harm in her peace and in her health. Having heard, in 1873, of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, and of the numerous graces She lavished, she took several little images, and made, with the consent of her father, a vow to go to Rome for a visit to the sanctuary of Our Lady, if she recovered tranquility in her soul. The Blessed Virgin heard her. Hardly had she formulated her vow when she felt herself free of her interior sufferings, and, together with peace, her strength returned, sleep, appetite, and in a word, health of soul and body.

May the Virgin of Perpetual Help be loved, praised, invoked and eternally blessed! May She be my hope, my love, my Mother, my refuge and my life. Amen.



SEVENTH DAY

*Act of Contrition and Preparatory Prayer from the First Day
(see page 6)*

MEDITATION

*Our Lady of Perpetual Help grants Her devotees
fidelity in Her service*

Perseverance! A great problem, a major question of life or death, a perpetual torment of souls who want to be saved. Have you not said trembling -- on seeing yourself surrounded by so many dangers, and above all, on seeing souls that seemed confirmed in good fall away, on feeling violent passions inflamed, and on examining your own fickleness -- have you not said: "O, will I be saved? Have my sins been

forgiven? I hope so. Am I in the grace of God? Will I persevere in good until the end? What will be my sentence at judgment? Will I be found among the predestined? And, finally, what will be my lot in eternity?" Terrifying reflections, questions whose uncertain replies fill the heart with anxiety. St. Teresa, writing on this point, could not understand why the pen did not fall from her hand. St. Paul, after having preached to others, feared that he would be among the reprobate, and St. Jerome responded beforehand to the sound of the trumpet of final judgment with cries of terror.

How, then, to get rid of this annoying doubt? How to find a guarantee of tranquility? A great saint tell us: "Of what value is it to stir up these questions disputed by the wise ones concerning whether you will be saved or lost? If we are true children of Mary, certainly we will be among the chosen ones." This is the doctrine of all the Doctors of the Church. It is impossible for one who counts on the most powerful help of Mary to be condemned. A consoling word that should fill us with confidence and devotion. But this is understood on the condition that one lives without sins or desires at least to cease sinning; because if someone wants to sin with the hope that the Blessed Virgin will save him, through his own fault he would make himself unworthy and incapable of Her protection. It is true, then, O Mother of Perpetual Help, that if I am Thy faithful servant, without doubt I will be saved. I will serve Thee, then, I will love Thee; I will invoke Thee always.

Nevertheless, Christian soul, you are still not at peace concerning your perseverance; you must still fear one thing. Without doubt Most Holy Mary will save you if you invoke Her; but, will you be faithful in Her service? Will you, one day, cease to be Her devotee? So great is the fickleness of our heart that tomorrow you will give up what today you have begun. Have, perchance, all those who were devotees of the Virgin in the beginning, persevered in Her service?

For this great misery, called inconstancy, there is a remedy in Our Lady of Perpetual Help. She Herself is the One Who must help us to persevere in Her service. If all graces pass through the hands of Mary, why would not this most special grace of graces, that of invoking Her perpetually, also pass through them? And the very name itself of Perpetual Help, is it not almost a sure guarantee that She will help us perpetually? How could we weaken in Her love and forget Her? If a mother, according to nature, knew that a child of hers could not be happy without enjoying the attentions of his mother, what would she not do to keep him at her side? Well then, our august Queen knows that there cannot be happiness for us, Her very beloved children, without our having fidelity in Her service, which is intimately united to the service of the Lord, and that is why She provides Her devotees with His paternal help, abundantly and perpetually.

When a soul who has been at one time Her devotee wishes to abandon Her, that tender Mother waits, so to speak, at the door of his heart and knocks until it is opened, that is, until the unfaithful one returns to his primitive fervor. We have, then, an infallible means of assuring ourselves of perseverance in the devotion to Mary; it suffices to ask Her for the grace to call on Her always; to ask Her for the grace today; to ask Her tomorrow and every day. In short, O soul devoted to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, engrave in your memory that maxim of the great doctor, St. Alphonsus: "I am sure that I will be saved, if I sincerely invoke Mary; I am sure of invoking Her, if I ask of Her the grace to do so always, and I will not tire of repeating this petition of imploring Her with fidelity."

Let us conclude, then, by saying with St. Bernard: "O man, whoever you may be, do not forget that, rather than walking on earth, you go fluctuating between dangers and tempests; if you do not want to be immersed, do not take

your eyes away from this star: Mary. Look at Her often. When in danger of sinning, in the anguish of temptations, in doubts concerning things you must resolve, remember that Mary can assist you, and call on Her right away, so She may help you. Never let Her powerful name leave your heart, so it may inspire you with confidence; nor your lips, so you may invoke it. Follow Mary, and you will not stray from the path of salvation; commend yourself to Her and you will not lose confidence; if Her hand sustains you, you will not fall; if She is your guide, you will be saved without effort; and finally, if Mary takes your defense, undoubtedly you will arrive at the kingdom of the blessed. Do thus, and you will live." Amen.

Meditate and ask . . . Recite the Joys (see page 9)

EJACULATORY PRAYER

O Mother of Perpetual Help! Grant me Thine omnipotent aid and grant that I may ask for it without ceasing.

EXERCISE

Do not let one day pass without reciting three Hail Marys, morning and night, to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, to obtain the grace of invoking Her on the following day.

PRAYER

O my Mother of Perpetual Help! In Thy hands I place my poor soul; I entrust to Thee my perseverance; intercede for me, an unhappy sinner. Take me under Thy protection and this will suffice for me. Indeed, if Thou protectest me, I have nothing to fear. I do not fear my sins, because Thou wilt remedy the evil they have caused me. I do not fear the devils, because Thou art more powerful than all Hell. I do

not even fear my Judge Himself, because by one word from Thee, Thou wilt appease His just indignation. No; I do not fear anything. O! In spite of all this, my Mother, one fear assaults me. And it is that of forgetting Thee, of ceasing, one day, to call Thee to my aid, and thus to be lost for all eternity. O my tender Mother! Obtain for me the grace of commending myself to Thee always; and if now Thou foreseest that one day I will abandon Thee, let me die today at Thy feet, before the world may be a witness to such great ingratitude. But no, O Mother, I will not forget Thee; I would rather that my right hand wither, that my tongue be paralyzed, than not one day go to sing Thy mercies forever and ever. Amen.

EXAMPLE

In a certain city in England, a man, completely given to drinking, used to come home every day in a state of intoxication. One day his unhappy wife, tired of all she was suffering from her husband's perversity, lamented her lot before a devotee of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The latter, moved to compassion, gave a medal of that Virgin to the afflicted wife, advising her to light a candle in honor of her dear Mother every day.

The woman promised to do so and began to recite the holy Rosary before the miraculous medal. Her husband returned that day, at a late hour, as was his custom, but not intoxicated.

After some time had passed, the woman related to her pious advisor, who was asking her about her husband: "Since I began to honor Our Lady of Perpetual Help, he has amended; he returned to his vice only once when, distractedly, I forgot to fulfill the promise I made to the Mother of God."

Thus the Blessed Virgin rewards Her devotees.

May the Virgin of Perpetual Help be loved, praised, invoked and eternally blessed! May She be my hope, my love, my Mother, my refuge and my life. Amen.



EIGHTH DAY

*Act of Contrition and Preparatory Prayer from the First Day
(see page 6)*

MEDITATION

***Our Lady of Perpetual Help assists Her devotees
at the hour of death***

Consider that, although man needs the benign help of Mary at all times, and in all circumstances, never, however, as much as in the anxieties of death, which are the greatest that can be experienced in this world.

Terrible, indeed, very terrible, are the afflictions of the dying. Everything conspires to make those last moments terrible: the memory of sins committed, the fear of the incomprehensible judgments of an offended God, the uncertainty of eternal salvation, everything, everything. Especially then, Hell arms itself and puts into action all its forces to possess the soul that is going to pass into eternity, because it knows that only a little time remains before it is to be judged and that, if it does not succeed in ruining it, it will be saved for ever. That is why the wicked spirit, accustomed to tempting it in life, is not content solely with tempting it at the hour of death, but even calls his companions to help him. They say that, at the moment of St. Andrew Avellino's death, ten thousand devils gathered in his cell to tempt him.

But if, at that time, we have on our side the most powerful help of Mary, who will be able to overcome us? And, how will that gracious Mother deny us Her aid if we persevere in asking for it? She Herself revealed to St. Gertrude that She grants aids to Her devotees, at the point of death, for as many times as they have implored Her in life.

O, my friend! How fortunate you will be, if, at the critical moment of death, you find yourself bound by the chains of love to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. These are the chains of salvation and of eternal glory. No; that tender Mother does not know how to abandon Her true devotees at that supreme moment. She is the Mother of Perpetual Help; and just as She has helped them in the time of their exile, so also She exhibits Her sweetness at the hour of death and obtains for them a sweet and happy death.

And above all, showing Herself worthy of the beautiful name She bears, She sends the prince St. Michael with all the angels to the aid of Her faithful dying children, so they go then to defend them from the snares of the devils and

receive the souls of all those who have continually commended themselves to Her.

She is not content with sending angels to the aid of Her devotees; She Herself will come in person to assist them in their last moments.

Since that great day when She had the good fortune and at the same time the sorrow of assisting Her Son Jesus, Who is the first of the predestined, She obtained the grace of assisting all of them also at the terrible moment of death. That is why the Holy Church makes us pray for Her to help us especially in the hour of our death. "Pray for us, sinners, now and at the hour of our death."

And this is found to be in conformity with what the Blessed Virgin said to St. Bridget, speaking of Her devotees: "Then, My daughter, as their Mistress and Mother, when they die, I will go out to meet them so they may have consolation and comfort." The loving Queen then covers these souls with Her mantle and presents them to the Judge, Her Son, and thus surely attains salvation for them.

Christian, although you may have been a sinner, you will not cease experiencing this consolation, provided that, from now on, you manage to live well and to serve this gracious and most amiable Lady. In your anguish and in the temptations with which the devil will assault you at death to make you despair, Our Mother of Perpetual Help will give you fortitude and will come Herself to defend you. And, with such a Mother and Protector, what will you fear, O sinner?

Meditate and ask . . . Recite the Joys (see page 9)

EJACULATORY PRAYER

O Mother of Perpetual Help! Pray for us now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

EXERCISE

Commend yourself three times a day to Our Lady of Perpetual Help to attain a happy death.

PRAYER

O Mother of Perpetual Help! What will become of me when I am at the point of delivering my soul to God? From now on, when I consider my sins, when I think of that terrible moment that must decide my salvation or my eternal perdition, I begin to tremble and become perplexed. O my Mother of Perpetual Help! Do not abandon me in that tremendous hour. What will become of me if Thou dost abandon me in that supreme moment? O, Holy Virgin, my Hope, come to my aid in the tremendous anguish in which I will then be held prisoner. Fortify me when the devil wants to fling me into despair by the memory of the sins I have committed. Obtain for me the grace to invoke Thee then more often than ever, so that I may die uttering Thy most sweet name, together with that of Thy adorable Son, and that I may die loving God and loving Thee, to go afterwards to love Thee eternally in Paradise. Amen.

EXAMPLE

A woman from the Pontifical States went one day to Rome to venerate the miraculous image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. A priest, to whom she addressed herself, asked her what was the motive that had decided her to undertake such a long trip. She answered him: "My husband told me

several times that in this Church a very miraculous image of the Virgin, called Our Lady of Perpetual Help, was venerated. He often commended himself to Her and received many graces through Her intercession. A little while ago he died. When he approached death, he said to me that he saw Our Lady at his bedside. He received such consolation from this apparition that he seemed not to feel the pains of death, and he died so gently and piously that I have no doubt about his salvation; and my greatest happiness would be to die as he did."

May the Virgin of Perpetual Help be loved, praised, invoked and eternally blessed! May She be my hope, my love, my Mother, my refuge and my life. Amen.



NINTH DAY

*Act of Contrition and Preparatory Prayer from the First Day
(see page 6)*

MEDITATION

Our Lady of Perpetual Help helps Her devotees in Purgatory

Will the exercise of Mary's mercy be limited, by chance, to the threshold of eternity or before the tribunal of Jesus Christ? O no! Remember that Her help is perpetual. With maternal solicitude, She continues working on our behalf until She sees us at Her side in glory. This compassionate Mother helps Her devotees not only in all the necessities of life and at death, but also in Purgatory. Since the imprisoned souls need greater help, because they are more tormented and cannot be relieved by their own efforts, this Queen of mercy busies Herself with greater efficacy in helping them.

Above all, just hearing Her most holy name pronounced alleviates those unhappy prisoners. They are consoled on thinking that the help of their Mother is perpetual and that it extends, therefore, even to that horrifying prison. One day, Jesus told Her, as St. Bridget heard it: "Thou art My Mother, the Mother of mercy, the consolation of those who find themselves in Purgatory;" and the Blessed Virgin said to the aforementioned saint that, just as the words of consolation She addresses to a poor sick, afflicted and abandoned one, on his bed of sorrow, delight him, so also were those souls consoled with just hearing Her name. For Her dear children, this name is a great relief in that prison, for which they invoke it often. And the loving Mother, on hearing them invoke it, provides them Her maternal help, directs

Her pleas to God with which many souls are helped and refreshed, as with heavenly dew, in their great sufferings.

Moreover, as sovereign Queen, She exercises in that prison Her dominion and the fullness of Her powers, not only to relieve, but also to free from their pains those holy prisoners. And in regard to relieving them, St. Bernardine of Siena, applying to the matter we are dealing with, those words of Ecclesiasticus, "*I have walked in the waves of the sea,*" says: this is, visiting and helping in the necessities and pains of My devotees, who are My children. The pains of Purgatory may be called waves, adds the aforementioned saint, because they are transitory, different from those of Hell, that never pass; and they may be called waves of the sea, because they are very bitter pains.

Afflicted by those pains, the devotees of Mary are often visited and aided by Her. Mary Herself revealed to St. Bridget that She was the Mother of all the souls that are found in Purgatory, because all the pains they deserve for the offenses they committed in life, in a certain manner, are mitigated, hour by hour, by Her pleas. The compassionate Mother does not disdain descending at times to that holy prison to visit and console Her afflicted children. How important it is, then, to dedicate oneself to the veneration of that kindest Queen, since Her devotees are not forgotten in the purifying flames of Purgatory!

But Mary not only consoles, aids and visits Her children in that prison of expiation, but also at times, She takes them away from there to carry them to Heaven. On the day of Her glorious Assumption, one pious tradition holds, Purgatory was left vacant, because Mary had asked and obtained from Jesus Christ the privilege of taking with Her to glory all the souls that were then grieving in that place where fire purifies all stains. And it is a matter of faith that with Her pleas and petitions She has the singular privilege of freeing,

as it pleases Her, the souls in Purgatory, and especially those of Her most devoted children. Be a sincere devotee of this tender Mother, therefore, so you, too, may feel the sweet effects of Her maternal help when you are in Purgatory. Even more: ask Her to grant you, before death, the grace of making an act of such perfect love that you may fly to Heaven without even passing through those purifying flames.

Meditate and ask . . . Recite the Joys (see page 9)

EJACULATORY PRAYER

O Mother of Perpetual Help! Have mercy on the souls in Purgatory and especially those who were most devoted to Thee.

EXERCISE

Hear Mass and receive Communion in honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help for souls.

PRAYER

O Mother of Perpetual Help! O Thou Who dost never abandon Thy children and helpst them perpetually in life, in death, and even in Purgatory itself, behold here at Thy feet a poor sinner who, filled with confidence, has recourse to Thee and gives himself to Thee. Many and great are the sins I have committed; I hope, O my Mother, that they have been forgiven; but I do not know if I have done for them the penance due, and it is likely that I may have to continue expiating them in Purgatory. Ah, if such would be my lot, do not cease to visit me in that terrible prison; console me then and alleviate my pains. Finally, be my perpetual help until seeing me in Heaven, praising Thee and singing of Thy mercies for all eternity. Amen.

EXAMPLE

Austria 1876: A God-fearing woman had a son of very bad character and with very bad habits. To maternal advice he was apt to reply: "I know what I must do." One day the mother, filled with confidence, made a pilgrimage to Catzelsdorf, some four leagues distant, by a laborious road, to a sanctuary of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. As soon as she arrived before the altar of the Virgin she knelt down and prayed a long time, begging with abundant tears for the conversion of her son. Meanwhile, her son, who remained at home, began to feel a sudden change of heart, together with a great confidence in Her Who is the Refuge of sinners.

The good mother returned to her home, related what she had seen and heard, and spoke of her emotion in the presence of the holy image. The prodigal son, on hearing this, could not resist grace and made a resolution to make that same pilgrimage as soon as possible. He did it alone and without his mother's knowing of it. Our Lady finished what She had begun, granting to that unfortunate one, as a reward for that act of virtue, the grace of a sincere contrition and of a good confession. Reconciled with his God, he received Communion and returned home. It was his luck that he had not been deaf to the voice of God, for a little later he was a victim in a sad accident and died suddenly. His poor mother was ignorant of this conversion. How great, then, was her bitter and inconsolable sorrow, believing her son had died in the sins of his past. She could do nothing but weep day and night.

But She Who had saved the sinner, did not leave the pious mother without consolation. One night she saw her son in her dreams. He was in Purgatory and from the midst of the flames he extended his arms, crying: "My mother, my mother. I am not condemned, but I suffer horribly in this place. Go, I beg you, on a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Perpetual Help of Catzelsdorf!"

As soon as she awoke, the poor woman, without concerning herself with her duties, went to the Church mentioned.

Prostrate at the feet of the Virgin, after having received Holy Communion, she prayed fervently for her dead son. And then she learned from his confessor what she had been ignorant of: that a few days before, her son, too, had come to pray before the protective image and had not returned to his house without having reconciled himself with God and prepared himself for death.

On hearing such happy news, her grief was transformed into pure joy. Praising and blessing the merciful Mother, she went to relate everywhere the wonders worked by Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

May the Virgin of Perpetual Help be loved, praised, invoked and eternally blessed! May She be my hope, my love, my Mother, my refuge and my life. Amen.



**Publications of
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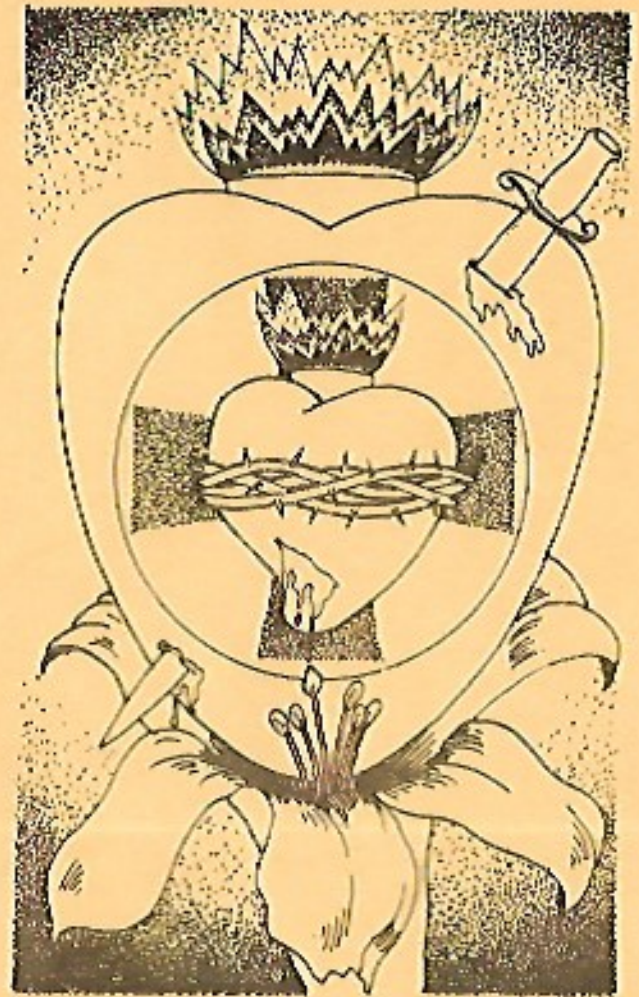
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of the Perpetual Help of Mary

Penitential Rosary
booklet of the Rosary with the Little Office
of the Holy Ghost; ordered by Our Lord
of the Mexican "Portavoz"

May it be for the glory of God!



The Heart of Jesus, the Word Incarnate
in Mary, is united to Her maternal Heart;
and both are a single entity in suffering
for the redemption of the world